

Message Text

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43

ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 PRS-01

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 SSO-00

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O R 091708Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6033

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRUSSELS 01326

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, BE, US

SUBJECT: LETTER TO SECDEF RUMSFELD FROM BELGIAN MINISTER OF
DEFENSE VANDEN BOEYNANTS

1. VANDEN BOEYNANTS HAS FURNISHED US WITH A COPY OF SUBJECT
LETTER DATED FEBRUARY 6. FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF
LETTER:

"DEAR MR. MINISTER AND COLLEAGUE:

I WOULD LIKE TO RAISE THREE SUBJECTS IN THIS LETTER WHICH CONCERN
ME.

YOU ARE CERTAINLY AWARE THAT WE IN BELGIUM ARE PASSING THROUGH
A DIFFICULT PERIOD FOR THE FUTURE OF THE F-16 PROGRAM. THE INDUSTRIES

ARE PARTICULARLY WORRIED OVER THE PLANS WHICH HAVE BEEN PRESENTED
TO THEM CONCERNING CO-PRODUCTION. EACH ONE IS TRYING TO FIND
ADEQUATE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS POSED, BUT I CANNOT EXCLUDE
THE NEED FOR A FUTURE MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETING TO ADDRESS THE
MAJOR DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED.

THESE (DIFFICULTIES), ACCORDING TO MY ANALYSIS,
ARISE BECAUSE ONE DOES NOT FIND ON ALL THE OFFICIAL AND
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INDUSTRY NEGOTIATING LEVELS THE SAME DETERMINATION AND THE SAME

WILL TO ARRIVE AT A PROPER SHARING BETWEEN US THAT I FOUND
AT THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE LEVEL.
MY SECOND POINT CONCERNS THE BELGIAN MAG MACHINE GUN.
ACCORDING TO INFORMATION FROM EXCELLENT SOURCES I HAVE
LEARNED THAT THIS WEAPON SHOWED SUPERIOR QUALITIES DURING
THE COMPETITIVE TESTS CARRIED OUT BY THE AMERICAN RMY
AND THAT IN THE PRESENT COMPETITION IT OCCUPIES AN EXCELLENT
POSITION.

BELGIAN PUBLIC OPINION IS BECOMING WORRIED OVER THE
STATEMENTS BY CERTAIN AMERICAN POLITICAL FIGURES RECOMMENDING
THAT PRIORITY BE GIVEN TO AMERICAN-PRODUCED EQUIPMENT. I
TAKE THE LIBERTY OF RECALLING THAT THOUGH IN THE STRICT SENSE
OF THE TERM THERE WAS NEVER A QUESTION OF LINKING THE DECISION
TO ACQUIRE THE F-16 WITH THE SELECTION OF THE BELGIAN MACHINE
GUN BY THE UNITED STATES, IT WAS NEVERTHELESS, TRUE THAT
YOUR PREDECESSOR MR. SCHLESINGER ASSURED ME THAT IF THE MAG
MACHINE GUN WERE BETTER, A LARGE ORDER OF AT LEAST 10,000
UNITS WOULD BE PLACED WITH THE BELGIAN INDUSTRY.
I DARE COUNT ON YOUR COOPERATION AND YOUR UNDERSTANDING
IN THE RESOLUTION OF THIS DELICATE PROBLEM, WHICH RISKS
HAVING IMPORTANT POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS IN (BELGIAN)
PUBLIC OPINION.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO ADDRESS A THIRD SUBJECT WHICH I
DISCUSSED WITH YOU DURING OUR LAST MEETING IN BRUSSELS. IT
CONCERNS THE EPERVIER SYSTEM WHICH WAS PRESENT TO THE U.S.
MARINE CORPS DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON JANUARY 29, 1976.
I HAD THE OCCASION TO TELL YOU THAT BELGIUM HAD
CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN THIS NATIONAL TECHNOLOGICAL SUCCESS.
IT THUS FOLLOWS THAT EVEN A LIMITED ORDER FOR THIS SYTEM BY
THE AMERICAN ARMED FORCES APPEARS TO ME TO BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT.
AMERICAN INTEREST FOR MATERIAL OF EUROPEAN ORIGIN WOULD
BE INTERPRETED AS SIGNIFICANT IN SHOWING THE WILL OF YOUR
GOVERNMENT IN TANGIBLE WAYS TO LEAD THE "TWO-WAY STREET"
DIALOGUE WHICH THE US HAS PROMOTED.
I DARE TO BELIEVE MR. MINISTER AND DEAR COLLEAGUE
THAT YOU WILL PAY ATTENTION TO THESE VARIOUS PROBLEMS WHICH
ARE REAL IN BELGIUM. THEIR SOLUTION CAN ONLY BE BENEFICIAL
TO THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND FOR THE
CREDIBILITY OF THE GOALS WHICH WE ARE PURSUING WITHIN THE
ALLIANCE. COMPLEMENTARY CLOSE,
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(SIGNEE)

VANDEN BOEYNANTS"

2. COMMENTS FOLLOW SEPTTEL. RENNER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Executive Order: R1 19880721 MCMANAWAY, C E
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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TAGS: MASS, BE, US, (VANDEN BOEYNANTS, PAUL), (RUMSFELD, DONALD)
To: STATE THE HAGUE DOD
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